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 Seattle Alliance for Media Education

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Contact mediaed@u.washington.edu

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Alphabet Soup: how YOU can be the media

APR - 9 2003

- A** **Airwaves are a public resource.** They should be available for all of us to use, enjoy, and be thankful for. That's why the FCC was created - to protect the airwaves! Find out more at www.fcc.gov or www.prometheusradio.org. Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
- B** **Boycott irresponsible media, and tell them about it.** For example, when your favorite newspaper repeatedly misrepresents stories you care about, call them on it! Put your money where your mouth is, and refuse to buy the paper again until they start reporting more responsibly. Counter racism in television by calling the station to complain, as well as the advertisers who supported the program.
- C** **Cameras are your friend.** You may not know this, but even a disposable camera can be used to document important events and spontaneous situations. Be a renegade photojournalist, an image poet, a freelance photographer! Publish your photographs yourself online, through www.indymedia.org, put them in your own zine, or submit them to your local newspapers or magazines.
- D** **Deconstruct advertisements.** Ads can seep into your subconscious...like that stupid mattress company jingle that gets stuck in your head, or that nagging feeling that you can never be as successful or as thin as the images in perfume ads. Don't let the ads get to you! Stay awake, stay critical, and don't let the advertising industry tell you who you should be!
- E** **Everyone's voice counts, and everyone has a story to tell.** When you want to be entertained, ask someone you love to tell you a story about their life. You'll learn more about that person, your relationship with them will grow, and you'll save on electricity by not turning on the TV!
- F** **Free speech is not to be taken for granted!!!!!!!** The freedom of expression is one of our most beautiful and precious national resources. Exercise your freedom to express yourself, cherish it, and fight for it. Experience the thrill and the responsibility of speaking your mind!
- G** **Get a tape recorder.** Conduct your own interviews, commit your ideas to tape, collect interesting soundbites. When you've got some material together, compile it, and share it with your friends and family.
- H** **Have conversations about media with your friends.** Have your friends over for cake and "Dawson's Creek", and then discuss the commercials together. Having conversations about the media will help you remember that the media isn't more powerful than you are. And maybe you'll learn something, too!
- I** **Innovative media is all around you!** Seek out new and exciting news sources, or tune in to a radio station you've never listened to before. You may discover your new favorite thing!
- J** **Just think!** Don't just do anything because Cosmo or Crest or Barbara Walters tell you to. Think for yourself!
- K** **Kick your media habits.** Try giving up television for one week. Or try writing in your journal in the morning instead of listening to the news. Abstaining from some of the media you use everyday can help you stay focused on your own life, and in touch with yourself.
- L** **Learn a new skill.** Teach yourself HTML with an online tutorial. Take writing or photography classes at a local college, university, or community center.

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- M** **Make your own movie.** Borrow or rent a video camera, create a script based on your favorite song or a story you've written. Get your friends together and roll tape! The finished product might not be ready for Cannes, but it'll probably be fun to make!
- N** **Now is the time to get involved!** The media landscape changes everyday, so if you want to have an effect, make your voice heard! Visit www.reclaimthemedial.org, or contact the Seattle Alliance for Media Education (mediaed@u.washington.edu) to find out more.
- O** **Optimism is key!** Let's be optimistic about the future of our media and our society. At the recent World Social Forum in Brazil, poet Arundhati Roy put it beautifully: "Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."
- P** **Pay attention to what's around you.** Start keeping track of how often you're exposed to different kinds of media...you may be surprised!
- Q** **QUESTION AUTHORITY.** Yes, it's that simple.
- R** **Racism sucks.** But it's still everywhere in the media. Your job is to learn how to identify it, reject it and condemn it. And don't keep quiet; tell advertisers, newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations to stop perpetuating racial stereotypes in the news and other media.
- S** **Speak up!** Call your local TV station, send a letter to the editors of your favorite (or least favorite!) newspaper, and call or email radio stations. Tell them what you think of them, ask them to cover the news you care about, criticize their mistakes, and give them props when they do a good job.
- T** **If you don't make TV, TV will make you!** Television can look like lots of things, not just "Joe Millionaire" or FOX News. TV can look like you. Get an internship at a local TV station. Or get involved in Public Access or Educational Access stations. Check out www.scantv.org for information on free TV production classes, or get in touch with your local Public Access station.
- U** **Use your head!** Don't let any media manipulate you without your consent. Don't just stay tuned, stay alert! You are the only person responsible for how you let the media affect you.
- V** **Volunteer at your local community radio station.** Volunteering is a great way to get involved in media and learn new skills, without drastically changing your daily schedule! Contact your favorite radio station for more information.
- W** **Websites are for everyone!** Create your own website, or create one to share with some of your friends or cohorts. Learn how to create your website at the Independent Media Center (IMC), or through the UW Experimental College. Lots of free email providers also offer free websites. All UW students can create a free website through UW computing. Also look for services like www.angelfire.com, that offer free websites. Your website could be an invaluable resource for others who share your interests!
- X** **Xerox stuff!** Not just because it starts with "x"...photocopy newspaper stories, magazine articles, and internet articles for your friends, family, classmates & co-workers. Sometimes the best news doesn't reach everyone, but you can help by sharing what you know and what you find! And by the way, it's 5 cents a copy to use the copier at the Independent Media Center (3rd & Union, downtown Seattle), and the proceeds benefit the IMC!
- Y** **Youth rule.** Or at least someday they will! The youth media movement is alive and growing. There's more to young people than the stereotypes portrayed in mainstream media. If you're a young person, start your own paper or video club, or get involved in programs like the SCAN Youth Channel (youthchannel@scantv.org). For more information about the youth media movement, check out www.listenup.org, www.wiretap.com, and www.oblivion.net!
- Z** **Zines aren't just for punk rockers.** All it takes to make your own zine is some paper, scissors, glue, and a brain in your head. Write ten poems about physics or politics or your mom, paste it together, print five copies and hand them out to people wearing blue. Have a goal, keep it simple, and amaze yourself with what you can do!